

**REMARKS**

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action issued on June 27, 2005 for the above referenced case. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 as anticipated over U.S. Pat. No. 6,218,971 issued to Sugihara and claims 2, 5 and 8 as obvious in view of Sugihara in combination with U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0189426 (Hirade). With entry of this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Among the benefits of the present invention is the ability to perform cascaded mixing without requiring an exclusive cascade terminal. In other words, one or more of the input terminals of a mixing apparatus are nonexclusive, i.e., usable for a cascade input as well as for a non-cascade input. Similarly one or more of the output terminals are non-exclusive. Having one or more non-exclusive terminals is a significant advantage, because each exclusive terminal presents a significant cost to the manufacturer and may be unnecessary to a user who is not performing cascaded mixing.

Independent claims 1, 4 and 7 were amended to recite that "at least one input terminal is nonexclusive to a cascade input" and that the audio signal input to this terminal is set as a "cascade signal". Independent claims 3, 6 and 9 were amended to recite that an output terminal "is nonexclusive to a cascade output." Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 were amended in other ways to better claim the invention.

Sugihara discloses neither an input terminal that is nonexclusive to a cascade input nor an output terminal that is nonexclusive to a cascade output. Instead Sugihara discloses a system which uses input terminals that are dedicated exclusively to receiving a cascade input (14a1, 14a2, 14b1, 14b2, in Figs 1-3). These should be distinguished from the input terminals used for non-cascade inputs (13a, 13b). Sugihara also discloses output terminals that are dedicated exclusively as cascade outputs (21a1, 21a2, 21b1, 21b2, in Figs 1-3). Once again, these should be distinguished from the outputs that are used as non-cascade outputs (20a, 20b). Sugihara does not disclose a single input or an output that may be used non-exclusively for cascade or non-cascade inputs and outputs.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 are not anticipated by Sugihara.

Dependent claims 2, 5 and 8 were rejected as obvious in view of Sugihara and Hirade. However, Hirade does not remedy the shortcomings of Sugihara. Hirade also discloses inputs that are dedicated exclusively to cascading (36 in Fig. 2B) as well as outputs that are dedicated exclusively to cascading (7, 8). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2, 5 and 8 are patentable over Sugihara and Hirade.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an additional extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 393032041200. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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